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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000195

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [KDEM](#) [ASEC](#) [GV](#)
SUBJECT: YOUTH RALLY IN SUPPORT OF DADIS AND THE CNDD

Classified By: A/DCM SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. A stadium packed with youths publicly demonstrated the country's alleged support for the military junta and its president, Moussa Dadis Camara, on March 29. The event was peaceful, but security was heavy. During the speeches, youth representatives demanded that Dadis stay in office through 2010. When Dadis said he had already committed to elections in 2009, the crowd erupted with shouts of "2010! 2010!" Several Embassy contacts commented that the carefully orchestrated event was nothing more than a CNDD attempt to manipulate the political situation, and akin to the tactics used by the late President Conte. END SUMMARY.

FILLED TO CAPACITY

¶2. (SBU) More than 25,000 youths gathered at the national stadium in Conakry on March 29 to demonstrate their support for the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD) and its president, Captain Moussa Dadis Camara. Observers told Pol/Econ Chief that people started arriving at the stadium at 9:00, many of them wearing pro-Dadis t-shirts and carrying banners. By 11:00, the stadium was filled to capacity and security forces began turning away would be participants. People were dancing and cheering as they waited for hours, finally welcoming Dadis at 15:00.

¶3. (SBU) Dadis was accompanied by Vice President and Minister of Defense Sekouba Konate, as well as a sizeable contingent of heavily armed security forces. Both men waved to the crowd from the roof of their vehicle before making their way to the VIP podium.

¶4. (SBU) Security was heavy throughout the day although the Minister of Security and 2nd Vice President, Toto Camara, was nowhere in sight. Two helicopters patrolled the stadium and the surrounding area while a heavy contingent of military personnel were stationed in and around the stadium. Tanks, mortars, and automatic machine guns were highly visible. Following the March 26 text message warning of a possible counter-coup attempt, Guinean security forces ordered the local cell phone companies to temporarily suspend text messaging services.

¶5. (SBU) Overall, the event was peaceful and orderly although some participants reportedly succumbed to dehydration and/or heat exhaustion. At one point, a fire brigade began spraying water on the crowd while the International Red Cross and other NGOs provided on site assistance to victims of the heat.

PLEASE DON'T GO!

¶6. (SBU) Representatives from a number of different groups,

including youth, students, and women, spoke at length, heaping praise on the CNDD for its efforts to combat corruption, drug trafficking, and high unemployment. At approximately 04:30, Dadis briefly addressed the crowd. When he announced the transition timeline, including plans to hold legislative and presidential elections by the end of 2009, the crowd interrupted and began shouting that Dadis should remain in power through 2010. Youth spokespersons claimed that Les Forces Vives did not consult with the youth on the transition timeline, which the youth find completely unacceptable. Dadis responded by saying that he had already committed to elections in 2009, but was repeatedly interrupted by loud demands for "2010! 2010!" Dadis finally informed the crowd that he would address the nation later that evening over national television (septel).

ALL NOT WHAT IT SEEMS

17. (C) Mouctar Diallo, the head of a youth political party (NFD), told Pol/Econ Chief on March 30 that the event was nothing more than "a show." According to Diallo, the new Governor of Conakry (Diop) is an old PUP (Party for Unity and Progress) loyalist who would frequently organize similar rallies for the late President Conte. "Diop is a demagogue...this is what he does and it is what he is good at," Diallo said. He added that Diop now feels loyal to the CNDD because they gave him the Conakry governorship.

18. (C) Diallo claimed that the bulk of the attendees were local university and high school students. Apparently, Diop

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sent letters to the city's private and public schools demanding that students attend the event. "I know because my brother was sitting in class when his teacher informed everyone that they had to go...it was mandatory," Diallo said. He noted that the event also attracted a certain number of curious citizens who simply wanted to see the Dadis spectacle. According to Diallo, the actual contingent of Dadis supporters was quite small. Describing them as "the mobilized," Diallo said these were the individuals wearing the t-shirts and pocketing the financial "incentives" for their attendance. Diallo added that the CNDD provided both government owned and rented buses for local transportation of participants.

19. (SBU) When asked about the youth speakers, Diallo said that the event organizers hand picked five youths, one from each commune of Conakry. "They did not represent anyone but themselves." Diallo noted that there are hundreds of large youth organizations in the country, including within Les Force Vives, but that none of these youth leaders were given the microphone. During a radio interview the same day, a reporter asked Diallo about the youths' demands. Diallo quickly responded "not THE youths' demands - SOME youths' demands!"

COMMENT

110. (C) By most accounts, the youth rally was little more than a carefully orchestrated event designed to promote Dadis and the CNDD. Despite the fact that the crowd did not seem to be truly representative of Guinea's youth leadership, the sheer mass of participants certainly made it look like Dadis is the man of the hour, at least among the country's young people. Multiple Embassy contacts commented that the rally was a carefully calculated political manipulation in the same spirit of the extensive manipulations of the Conte days. Some noted that the event gave Dadis the opportunity to demonstrate his commitment to organize elections in 2009, while providing him with an easy out since he can claim that he cannot ignore the demands of the youth, and thus, can opt

to prolong the transition. END COMMENT.
RASPOLIC